

**TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD**

**TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING**

**March 10, 2020, 7 p.m.,**

**Legislative Chambers**

**Re: Ordinance Amending the Schedule of  
Permitted Main Uses for Experiential  
Recreation and Restaurant Facilities.**

**A p p e a r a n c e s:**

**Town Council Members Present:**

**MAYOR SHARI CANTOR**

**LEON DAVIDOFF**

**CAROL BLANKS**

**CHRIS WILLIAMS**

**MARY FAY**

**BETH KERRIGAN**

**LIAM SWEENEY**

**BEN WENOGRAD**

**Alternate:**

**CARL DONATELLI**

**MATT W. HART**

**Town Manager**

**DALLAS DODGE**

**Corporation Counsel**

**ESSIE S. LABROT**

**TOWN CLERK**

**KRISTEN GORSKI**

**Economic Development Specialist**

1                   PRESIDENT CANTOR: I'd like to  
2 call the 7 p.m. ordinance amending the  
3 schedule of permitted main uses for  
4 experiential recreation and restaurant  
5 facilities to order.

6                   Rollcall, Ms. Labrot?

7                   MS. LABROT: Ms. Blanks?

8                   COUNCILOR BLANKS: Here.

9                   MS. LABROT: Ms. Cantor?

10                  PRESIDENT CANTOR: Here.

11                  MS. LABROT: Mr. Davidoff?

12                  COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: Here.

13                  MS. LABROT: Ms. Fay?

14                  COUNCILOR FAY: Here.

15                  MS. LABROT: Mr. Gold is  
16 absent. We have Mr. Donatelli.

17                  MR. DONATELLI: Here.

18                  MS. LABROT: Ms. Kerrigan?

19                  COUNCILOR KERRIGAN: Here.

20                  MS. LABROT: Mr. Sweeney?

21                  COUNCILOR SWEENEY: Here.

22                  MS. LABROT: Mr. Wenograd?

23                  COUNCILOR WENOGRAD: Here.

24                  MS. LABROT: And Mr. Williams?

25                  COUNCILOR WILLIAMS: Here.

1                   PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,  
2 Ms. Labrot.

3                   These are the same rules for  
4 this public hearing. So I won't repeat them  
5 all, because I don't think anyone new has  
6 walked in the room.

7                   So we will start with the  
8 presentation from the applicant, which is  
9 town staff.

10                  MR. HART: Thank you, Mayor.  
11 And I would invite our Economic Development  
12 Specialist, Ms. Gorski to come forward and  
13 make a brief presentation regarding the  
14 proposed amendment.

15                  Welcome.

16                  MS. GORSKI: Good evening.  
17 Kristen Gorski, Economic Development  
18 Specialist.

19                  So what you have before you  
20 tonight is a request to amend the schedule of  
21 permitted main uses to allow for number 60  
22 indoor recreation or amusement facility,  
23 excluding nightclubs, dance halls or dance  
24 clubs; to allow that in the BG or general  
25 business zone.

1                   A little background on that.

2   In 2017 the Town Council adopted an ordinance  
3   establishing definitions for experiential  
4   recreation and restaurant facilities, and  
5   that was permitted, adopted to be permitted  
6   in the CDBH zone, which is primarily Blue  
7   Back Square and a couple surrounding  
8   properties as well as the general industrial  
9   zone, which is our southeast corridor located  
10  south of New Britain Avenue area and areas  
11  along New Park Avenue.

12                  Within those definitions  
13  experiential recreation was defined based on  
14  a couple different things, which were to  
15  allow for people to pursue indoor leisure  
16  activities or games of skill.

17                  For example, billiards,  
18  bowling alleys, trampoline parks and then  
19  also for there to be an allowance of a  
20  restaurant or the ability to serve food and  
21  drink.

22                  So a caviat of that is if you  
23  are a restaurant and would like to sell  
24  alcoholic beverages there is a space  
25  requirement of a minimum of 5,000 square

1 feet.

2                   These uses that we are seeing  
3 in the marketplace is one of the reasons as  
4 to why we initially passed this ordinance.  
5 So as the retail landscape is changing  
6 businesses are oftentimes starting to  
7 decrease the footprints that they have as  
8 well as unfortunately closing. Spaces are  
9 popping up in a variety of areas within town.  
10 So we were looking for new avenues in order  
11 to support new creation of businesses and  
12 backfill these vacant spaces.

13                   The request to add the BG  
14 general business we believe will help to fill  
15 additional vacancies that may be coming down  
16 the pike. Currently there are zero users who  
17 are utilizing the indoor recreation ordinance  
18 currently, however we think with the addition  
19 of the BG that there could be additional  
20 opportunities for more businesses to look at  
21 a variety of different spaces in town and  
22 hopefully find a home here.

23                   So just in terms of process  
24 for approval, any indoor recreation would  
25 have to go through and receive a special use

1 permit through the Town Planning and Zoning  
2 Commission. They would also be required to  
3 receive an entertainment license through the  
4 police department.

5 And then one other item that  
6 it lists is there is a restriction in terms  
7 of hours of operation. These facilities  
8 would not be allowed to operate between  
9 midnight and 5 a.m.

10 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,  
11 Ms. Gorski.

12 Any questions for -- I don't  
13 know. Are you done?

14 MS. GORSKI: No, I can take  
15 questions.

16 PRESIDENT CANTOR: I'm sorry.  
17 Continue.

18 MS. GORSKI: It was so  
19 thorough I don't need to go on. Correct?

20 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Continue.

21 MS. GORSKI: So I was just  
22 going to note that when we look at the BG  
23 general business zone, that is primarily in  
24 our commercial corridors. Specifically if  
25 you look on the map that was provided for

1 you, Bishops Corner, Park Road, Corbin's  
2 Corner, Prospect at New Park, areas of New  
3 Britain Avenue and Sunset Triangle.

4           Primarily a lot of the general  
5 business zone has strip malls. Again, there  
6 might be larger vacancies in these strip  
7 malls. They historically have been able to  
8 attract a variety of big-box tenants, larger  
9 tenants. So specifically as we talk about  
10 the fact that no one has utilized the indoor  
11 recreation, yet we believe that it's due to  
12 that 5,000 square-foot space, because people  
13 want to be able to serve alcohol as a  
14 component and in both of the IG as well as  
15 CDBH zones there aren't a variety of these  
16 larger 5,000-plus square-foot spaces.

17           So we are asking for you to  
18 hopefully add the BG to incentivize for these  
19 new larger businesses to hopefully find  
20 opportunities here.

21           Questions?

22           PRESIDENT CANTOR: Okay. Any  
23 questions for Ms. Gorski?

24           COUNCILOR FAY: I have one.

25           PRESIDENT CANTOR: Ms. Fay?



1 COUNCILOR FAY: That was very  
2 good, Kristen. Do you foresee any particular  
3 sites in town where this would work where an  
4 entertainment type venue would work?

5 MS. GORSKI: Sure. So there  
6 were businesses that had been interested in a  
7 couple of locations that fortunately --  
8 unfortunately for those new businesses, but  
9 fortunately for the businesses that are  
10 currently located there, i.e., the Edge,  
11 Ulta -- there had been people interested in  
12 those locations. Those are both BG  
13 locations, however I think one that comes to  
14 mind is the former Shop-Rite space over off  
15 of Kane Street. So that is a large 70,000  
16 square-foot space.

17 You know, what are you going  
18 to do with that large of a footprint? I  
19 think that that would be an ideal location  
20 for this type of use.

21 COUNCILOR FAY: Thank you.

22 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you  
23 Ms. Fay. Thank you, Ms. Gorski.

24 So the special use permit  
25 zoning, the entertainment license -- and

1 there was a third. What was the third  
2 on the --

3 MS. GORSKI: The third thing  
4 was hours of operation. So they can't  
5 operate between midnight and 5 a.m.

6 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you  
7 so much.

8 MS. GORSKI: You're welcome.

9 PRESIDENT CANTOR: All right.  
10 Any other questions, comments?

11  
12 (No response.)

13  
14 PRESIDENT CANTOR: The sign-up  
15 sheet, is there anybody that signed up to  
16 speak?

17 No.

18 Is there anyone here that  
19 would like to speak to this public hearing.

20  
21 (No response.)

22  
23 PRESIDENT CANTOR: And then I  
24 would like to read into the record a letter  
25 dated February 5, 2020, from TPZ recommending

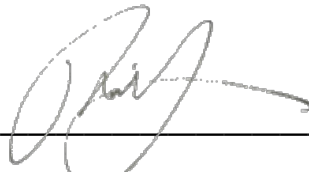
1 approval; a letter dated March 10, 2020,  
2 from CROG finding no apparent conflict.

3 And with that I will close the  
4 public hearing. And we will start our  
5 Council meeting in 20 minutes. Thank you.

6  
7 (End: 7:08 p.m.)  
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**CERTIFICATE**

I hereby certify that the foregoing 11 pages are a complete and accurate computer-aided transcription of my original verbatim notes taken of the Public Hearing in RE: ORDINANCE AMENDING THE SCHEDULE OF PERMITTED MAIN USES FOR EXPERIENTIAL RECREATION AND RESTAURANT FACILITIES, held before the West Hartford Town Council, at Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Room 314, West Hartford, Connecticut, on March 10, 2020.



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**My Commission Expires: 6/30/2020**